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**Chinese** 若要以其他語言或格式提供這些資訊，請與我們聯繫

**Polish** Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, skontaktuj się z nami.

**Portuguese** Queira contactar-nos se pretender as informações noutra idioma ou num formato diferente.



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## APHASIA understanding words

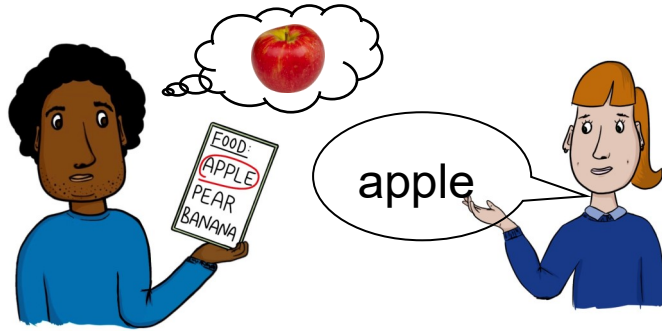
An accessible explanation of  
communication difficulties after stroke

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust—Caring, safe and excellent

## How we understand words: a brief explanation

This is what **normally happens** when we try to **understand a word**.

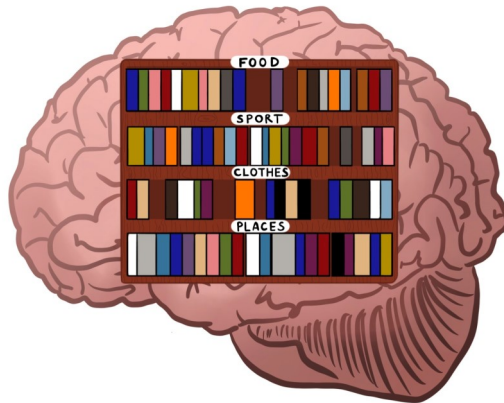
We either **see** or **hear** a word.



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We find the **word's meaning** in a **language store** in our **brain**. The store is like a **library**.

**Word meanings** are **stored** in categories e.g. sport, food etc.



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- ◆ Give **more time**
- ◆ Introduce **the subject** of the conversation
- ◆ **Don't change topics** quickly
- ◆ **Chunking** - give **small amounts of information** at a time



For example:

Your **daughter** phoned

She is **visiting** today

She is arriving **at 2pm**

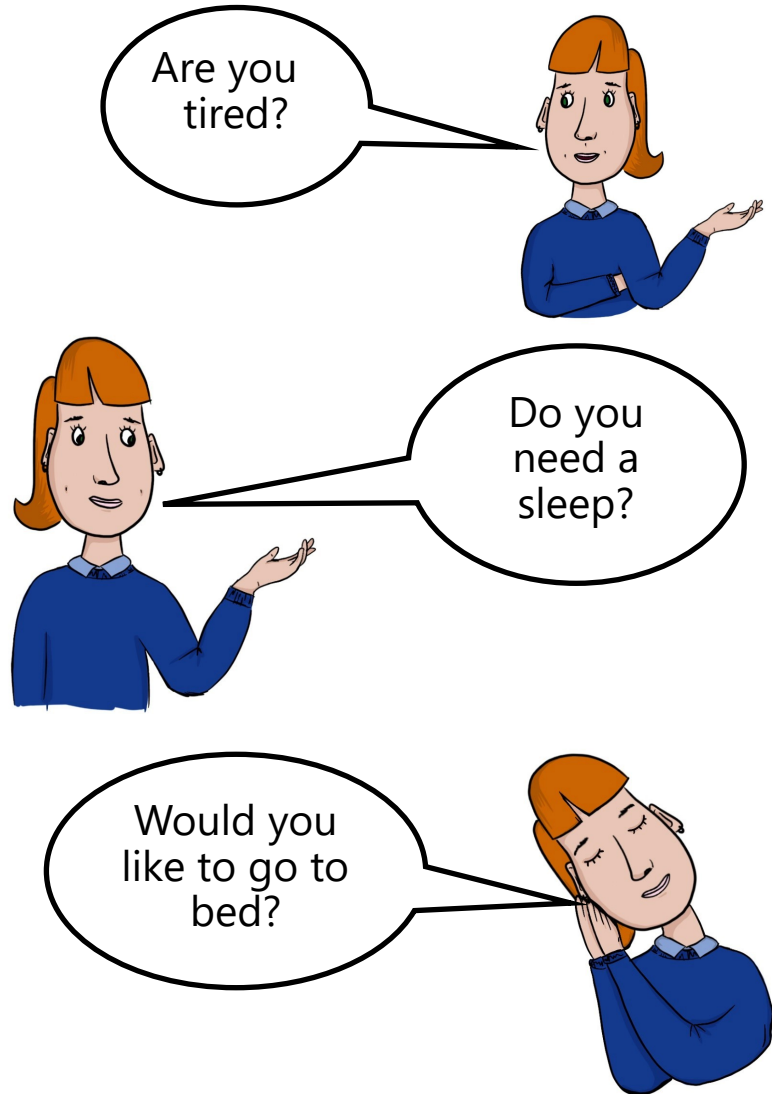
She's bringing **cake**



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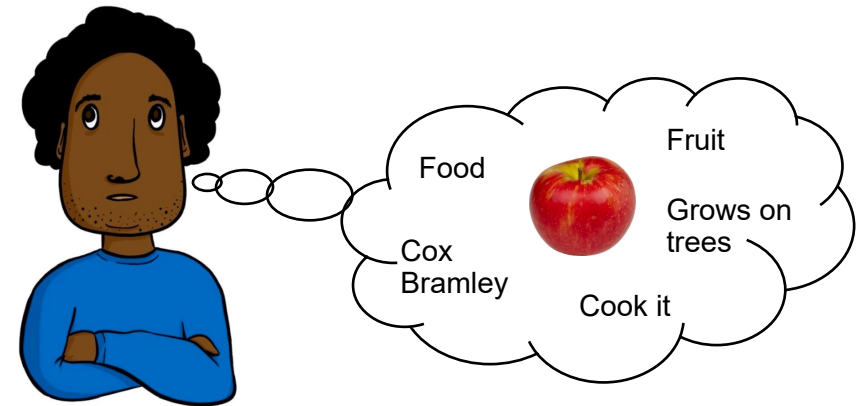
Adapted from original publications produced by SLTs from the York Cognitive Neuropsychology Research Group.  
Leaflet produced by Susannah Stobart, Speech and Language Therapist  
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Give **more information** or **repeat** the message in a different way.



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When we **find the word** we can think about its full **meaning**. We call this **storage** of **meanings** our **semantic system**. It is a complex system of **words** that are **linked together**.



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Everyone's **semantic system** is **unique**.

For example **family names**. Your **store** will have **different names** from mine.

Another example, a **chef** might '**store**' apples in the **puddings** category, whereas a **gardener** might link and store them with **fruit trees**.

## APHASIA

### What can go wrong with understanding

**Some** people with **aphasia** hear a word but **cannot** find the **correct 'place'** in their 'library', so they have **no understanding of the word**.



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**Some** people with **aphasia** can find the **correct** section in their 'library' but **cannot select** the **exact meaning**.

This is **similar** to being able to find the **correct shelf** and **section** but not the **right book** on the library shelf.

## How to help with understanding

Some of the following suggestions can be helpful

Talk about the **'here and now'** - what's happening around the person

**Show** what you are talking about, using a **real object** or **picture**



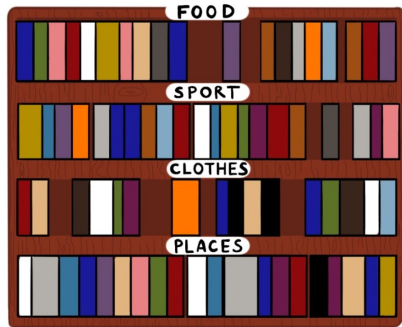
Use a **gesture**

Write **key words** in the message



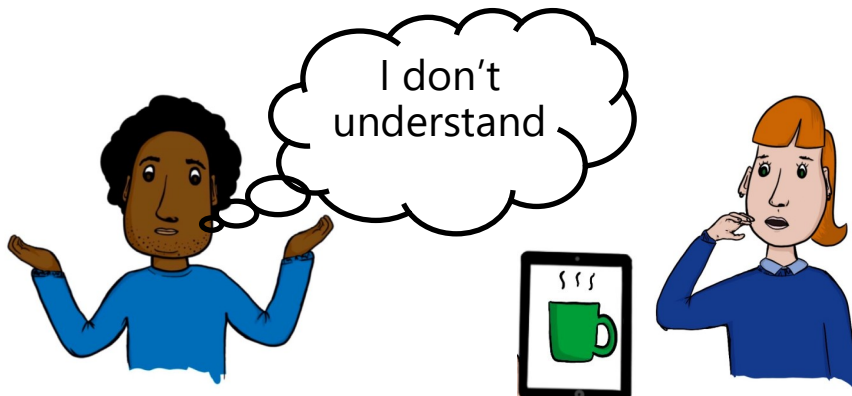
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**Similar problems** can occur when trying to understand **written words**, although the level of difficulty may vary from person to person.



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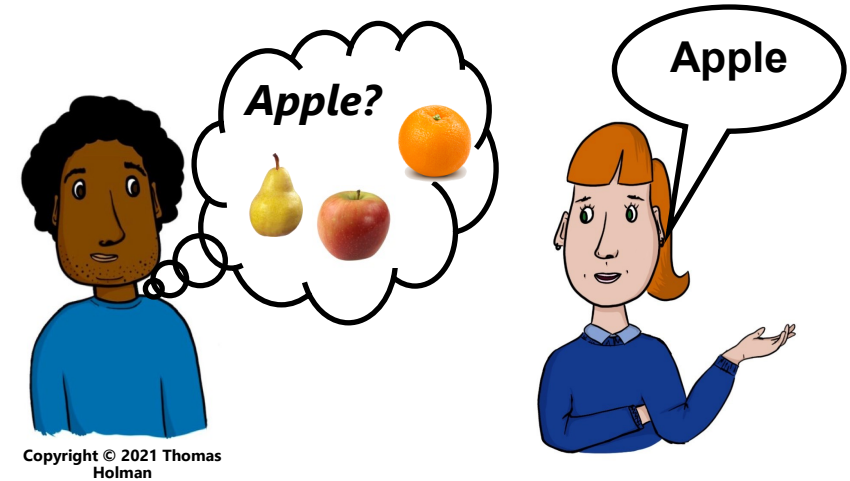
Some people may have **difficulties finding the meaning** of a word, even when they've seen a **picture** or a **gesture** of it.



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They may **select a more familiar** or **similar word meaning**.

They have an **understanding** of what is said but can **easily misunderstand**.



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For example the **word** 'apple' brings to mind a range of fruit but **not the precise** meaning.

Some people may need **more time** to **understand** the word meaning.

